

In Which Hopper is a Good Papa by the-singular-peep

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., J. Hopper

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-02-11 20:24:10

Updated: 2018-02-11 20:24:10

Packaged: 2019-12-17 00:40:09

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,073

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: It had been two months since That Night. Two months since the gate had been closed. Two months since Eleven had slept. Hopper was more than a little worried. [IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS OKAY SERIES. COMPLETE. PT 7/?. PART 6: "IN WHICH SANTA CLAUSE COMES TO TOWN."]

In Which Hopper is a Good Papa

In Which Hopper is a Good Papa

January 7, 1985. Monday.

It was two months since That Night.

Two months since the gate had been closed.

Two months since Eleven had *slept*.

It wasn't like Hopper didn't notice. He kept a very, *very* close eye on her now - He was watching for signs at all times, making sure she wasn't becoming depressed, or too lonely, or feeling unsafe again. She was actually happier now, and understandably so. She felt safe with Hopper again, she could see her friends again (sometimes), she could sometimes even go on walks out in the woods, as long as she held Hopper's hand.

And yet, something was still bothering her. Something was still haunting her dreams, still making her afraid to close her eyes.

Hopper had no doubt it was the image of the Mind Flayer, red and angry, staring her down, draining her of everything she had in her. He had to admit, sometimes it scared him too, and he didn't want to point out her fear to her - She hated to feel vulnerable, even still.

But after two months, when Eleven was falling asleep in her fruit loops at breakfast and the circles under her eyes were way too deep to be on a twelve year old's face, enough was enough.

"Kid, you've gotta start sleeping." Hopper said bluntly. He set his newspaper on the table as well as his coffee. He gave Eleven a look, and she shifted uncomfortably under his gaze.

"Have been," She mumbled, trying to disappear into the collar of his old t-shirt she had slept in. Her shoulders were pretty much at her ears, and Hopper could tell she was ready to bolt if only her feet were closer to the ground.

"No, you haven't. Cat naps at two pm and sleeping during *Days of Our Lives* don't count. That's called *narcolepsy*."

Eleven didn't get the joke, and Hopper mentally slapped himself for thinking she would.

"Look, kid. I know you don't sleep at night, and you gotta stop that. It's bad for you." He had already picked up his coffee again - he hated seeing Jane like this. She looked sad and scared and like she was hiding something, and he knew that pressuring her to talk about it would only push her farther into her shell. So he dropped it, and instead decided to bring something more positive up.

"So the other day Mike stopped by the office..."

At thirty minutes past when he'd sent Eleven to bed, Hopper knew what to do. It was nine o'clock on the nose, and Hopper stood up, turned the TV off, and walked over to Eleven's door. He knocked twice, and his knock was greeted by a very loud, very *fake* snore. He opened the door to find Eleven sitting up on her bed, her thumb tucked in her mouth and her eyes focused intensely on her coloring book. She was delicately coloring inside the lines, trying not to make any mistakes, and also trying not to let her eyes droop too far.

"Hey, girlie." Hopper said, leaning against the door frame. "I know you're not sleeping."

Eleven didn't look up. She carefully colored Raggedy Anne's hair a pale shade of pink and her pointer finger was cupped tightly around her nose as she sucked her thumb. She was ignoring him.

"You gotta sleep." Hopper tried. She curled in on herself a little more. "Your bedtime was thirty minutes ago." No response. He sighed.

"Want me to lay down with you?"

Eleven looked up, and her thumb dropped from her mouth. Hopper took that as a yes, and walked over slowly, moving her coloring book and crayons from the bed.

"C'mon. Scooch."

And she did.

Hopper sat beside her, his legs crossed at the ankles across the bed, and he fluffed the pillows behind them. Eleven looked up at him with big, *tired* brown eyes. Hopper rolled his eyes and gestured for her to lay. She did, but her eyes remained open and her arms were stiff atop her blankets. They lay there like that for nearly fifteen minutes before Eleven's tenseness was almost tangible.

"Did I ever tell you about the time I ran over the mailman?" Hopper started. Maybe a story would help. Eleven looked alarmed. "No, he was fine," He grinned, and continued. "So, I was learning to drive, right -"

"Scared." El said, and Hopper looked down at her, startled.

"What's that, baby girl?"

Eleven avoided eye contact.

"Scared. Of the dark. Of the.. monster. At nighttime. Can't sleep." She stuttered. She looked down, and Hopper saw the tears forming in her eyes. He could maybe pretend he didn't notice that, but he couldn't pretend he didn't see the way her chin began to quiver.

"Hey, no, stop. Look at me." Hopper gently took his girl's chin and tilted it up to him, careful not to force her into eye contact. She looked intently at his nose, and he took it as a good sign. "I'm not gonna tell you there's nothing to be afraid of, because you and me know that ain't true." Eleven's lips trembled even more, and Hopper was quick to put a stop to it. "But I can say that I'll always be right here. Nothing can take you from me. I already lost one of my girls, and there is no way I'll lose another. You got that? There is no way I'll let that happen."

Eleven's deep brown eyes met his pale blues, and Hopper held his breath. Her eye contact was rare, and Hopper cherished every moment of it. Her eyes flicked briefly from one eye to the other.

"Promise?" She whispered, and Hopper almost laughed.

"Yes I promise, kid." He smiled, and within seconds Eleven had pulled

him into a hug. He pushed a small kiss into her curls and hugged her back. "I'm always right here."

"Stay? All night long?" She said to his shoulder. Hopper hugged a little tighter.

"Course, kid. Course I'll stay."

It was approximately one minute and forty five seconds before Hopper felt Eleven go limp in his arms and heard tiny snores against his chest.

"Love you, girlie."